

REMARKS

In response to the requirement in the Office Action dated June 16, 2004 to elect a single discloses species for prosecution on the merits, claims 7 and 8, which the Examiner identifies as being directed to "Applicant's first embodiment" and identified as Group I, are elected for prosecution on the merits.

Claim 10 is "***Withdrawn***" as being directed to a non-elected species. Claims 7 and 8 are now active in this application.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 7 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mandel et al. (USPN 5,823,529, hereinafter Mandel '529) in view of Mandel et al. (USPN 5,358,238, hereinafter Mandel '238), for the reasons substantially of record.

The rejections are respectively traversed.

Claim 7 delineates, *inter alia*:

a plurality of notifying units respectively disposed on the paper ejection trays or in the vicinity of the paper ejection trays; and

a controller, connected with the notifying units, for controlling the notifying units including controlling a respective notification unit to communicate an indication notifying the user that the last ejected sheet is present in the corresponding paper ejection tray.

Thus, as recited in claim 7, there is an indication to the user of the specific tray, in distinction from the other trays, in which the last sheet is present. Thus, the user can be prevented from forgetting to take out the last ejected sheet even when continuous ejection is performed into a plurality of paper ejection trays.

With regard to claim 7, the Examiner contends that Mandel '529 discloses a notification means (controller 100 of FIG. 5) for notifying a user of a specific one of the paper ejection trays in which a last ejected sheet is present, referring to column 29, lines 22-34. The Examiner maintains that "the user send the print job to the "almost-full" bin of the printer, the print job is separated into two parts, the first part is delivered to the "almost-full" bin until the bin is full, then the rest of the print job is delivered onto newly assigned bin 11." In this regard, the Examiner contends "that the rest of that print job would be at least one of the last sheets". The Examiner notes further that the user is informed of that automatically through a message "col. 29, lines 33-34" and maintains that *"the user would be notified his print job locates on two different bins including the last bin storing the last part of the print job"* (Official Action – last line of page 4 through first line of page 5).

However, contrary to the Examiner's reasoning, Mandel '529 does **NOT** disclose which of these bins includes the last part of the print job (i.e., the last ejected sheet). More specifically, Mandel '529 discloses notifying a user of specific **two** (or more) of the paper ejection trays that contain the print job, but does not disclose notifying the user of a specific **one** paper ejection tray that contains the last ejected sheet. Referring to column 29, lines 29-43, it is described:

... However, if there is not enough room in that bin for feeding in the rest of that print job, and the "bin-full " sensor is actuated, *the print job can be split between* the user's assigned bin 11 and a newly assigned bin 11 or the overflow tray 11a, or another only partially filled bin, and *the user is then informed of that automatically through a message*. This option can also be used as a default in the case where the "bin-almost-full" condition is reached in the middle of a large job that will not all fit in the bin. However, if there is a "bin-full" signal for the bin, or the "bin-almost-full" condition exists prior to sending larger job to the printer for printing, then by default the entire job may be redirected to the selected alternate output area, such as the overflow tray, another unutilized unassigned bin, or the printer's output tray, while *informing the user*.

There is nothing in this description that informing the user includes any special indication, and in particular, that there is an indication that the newly assigned bin/tray is a newly assigned bin/try. In fact, the description at column 16, lines 22-28 supports the fact that there is no indication regarding the assigned trays having any special significance:

...That is, the mailbox system or system server can automatically generate network messages sent back to the user's (job senders) terminal 15, and/or to the systems administrator terminal 15, if desired, so that the terminal 15 screen displays a status message like "your print job is completed-*remove it from bins #3 and 4*"; or "the printer is out of paper"; or "all bins are full-clear bins to continue printing", and the like.

Thus, the user would be notified his/her print job locates on two different bins (i.e., the print job has been assigned to *bins #3 and 4*), and clearly, one of these bins would store the last ejected sheet, but there would be no indication as to whether the last ejected sheet is in *bin #3 or bin #4*. In particular, when the user retrieves the print job from *bins #3 and 4*, the user would have no way of determining from the information provided whether the last ejected sheet is in *bin #3 or bin #4*. That is, the user would have no information/indication as to whether *bin #3* was assigned to receive sheets first and that *bin #4* was subsequently assigned, or whether *bin #4* was assigned to receive sheets first and that *bin #3* was subsequently assigned. The above noted descriptions of Mandel '529 evince only that the user is informed that the print job is split between certain bins/trays. In the invention recited in claim 7, the bin that holds the last ejected sheet will have a specific indication (e.g., the respective notification unit will be blinking).

With respect to Mandel '238, the Examiner asserts that this reference teaches a plurality of notifying units disposed on the trays. However, the LCDs disclosed in Fig. 18 are provided so that the customers can be directed to find their "mail" at their assigned mailbox locations. Mandel '238 does not disclose or suggest that such LCD arrangement is/can be used for

recognizing a tray that includes the last ejected sheet. Thus, if the LCD arrangement of Mandel '238 were used in the system of Mandel '239, the LCD arrangement would indicate to the user (via his name) the plurality of bins/trays that have his/her entire print job, but there would be no indication as to which of these plurality of bins/trays has the last ejected sheet.

Thus, the claimed invention does not result even if the LCD arrangement of Mandel '238 were used in the system of Mandel '239. Consequently, independent claim 7, as well as dependent claim 8, are patentable over of Mandel '239 and Mandel '238, considered alone or in combination. Therefore, the allowance of claims 7 and 8 is respectfully solicited.

CONCLUSION

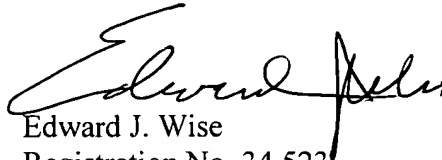
Accordingly, it is urged that the application is in condition for allowance, an indication of which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

09/526,177

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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